

## 'CUZ I'M STIL A KID AT HEART

Sat up late the other night & thought to myself. Every once in a while that reflective mood takes over, with me it always comes in the deep of night. I blame this one on my mom; she subtly reminds me how dangerous this messenging thing is... "It's right up there with being a lumberjack". Mom also sent me an article out of the Wall Street Journal that mentions an ex getting married.

This spoo & a cold & too much partying caught up with me on this night. As I lay tossing, unable to sleep, visions of non-grandeur dancing thru my head, it all became abundantly clear. Here I am just a few days short of my 30th b-day & I'm still single, still broke & still looking for a home. Shouldn't I be securing my future? Searching for the mother of my children? Curbing my partying ways?

NAH. And you know why? 'Cuz I'm still a kid at heart. I love riding my bike for a living (though body parts complain more). I go over bumps and hum a monotone just to hear the steady ah-ah-ah-ah that escapes my lungs. I still hop over cracks so my mother's back won't suddenly snap. I still jump when the express elevator goes down just to feel the weightlessness I'm sure Neil Armstrong felt. And weaving in and out of traffic is like racing to the candy store on my Stingray. Damn this is fun. Hell, I've even given up sh-v-ing (never did as a kid, did I?). Sure, my hygiene isn't always appealing. hey—you should have seen me as a kid. My adult (grown-up) portion tells me I'm saving water. If going no-handed BMing is the American way, yeah; I'm an all-American kid, hear that, Herb Caen? I'm twelve at heart, so I can ride on sidewalks legally. That's me, R, W & B. Red eyes, white feet & I blew my paycheck. 10-4

-Patié King...in life

## NOVEMBER...

15 the LOU family	18 GONE JACKALS
the POTATO EATERS	Idiot Savant
22 THE BIRDKILLERS	23 COLORFINGER
WADE	the MIECES
Timco	
29 BOURBON DELUXE	30 THE SMOKING RHYTHM PRAWN
The Billy Nayer Show	motherlode

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## Declassified Ads

Cook for Peace! Food Not Bombs is serving every night at 6:00 P.M., and M,T,Th & F at noon in front of city hall. To volunteer call 330-5030

L. Sid scrunched the crumpled bag into his pocket and sauntered on down the sewer pipe.

If you wanna register Green, see me (Fur). I think the party's getting its shit together, and anyway it's worth checking out. Depopublicans are lame!

Alaskan Bike Messenger seeks roommate gig preferably with other bikers. Lv. msg. for Douglas at Harvey's.

Do Market Street a favor: give the guy who sings in front of the Emporium some new sheet music!

Gotta band? Gotta gig? Mercury Rising wants to know about it. We wanna know what's happening with all messenger bands. Send us your stuff.

Alaskan bike messenger also works on bikes at reasonable rates. Leave msg. for Douglas at Harvey's.

T'M IN THE MIX, AND I MUST DEAL WITH "THE RIFF-RAFF"—Bobby Shaw, alias Bobby Black, who was taken from us by a murderer. Anyone who saw him after Sep. 27 please contact Inspectors Erdlate or Prosch at SF Police Homicide Division.

Senator Seymour Sucks! Since Goodball Wilson appointed him, he has supported continued aid to El Salvador's Fascists, encouraged Wilson to veto gay rights protection, voted to confirm Clarence Thomas, and voted against extending unemployment benefits. Let's swell the ranks of the protest at his office at 211 Main on Monday, November 18 at 7:30 AM. This is the 2nd anniversary of the massacre of Jesuits in San Salvador.

"Hello hello hello hello hello hello hello hello"—Clarence Thomas, greeting his fellow Supreme Court Judges

## Zine Reviews

AMCS Dispatch News Volume 4, Number 5  
Publication of our country's best. Strategy for avoiding getting sued when firing employees, info on a bill requiring messengers to drug test, and more. It's a good one. There are more misspelled words. A

Mess Press #1  
no e—A real cultural happening! Bloody Mary reviews, killer crossword puzzle, guest whose Zo bag by its contents, messenger bike tour coverage, great Bobby Black requiem, and re-including Patié King's call for bike messenger holiday which Agnos wisely heeded. With Nismo used a pen that worked though. B

A veritable piece of shit High points: crossword puzzle and summer tours. Lowpoints: I don't know 'cos I can't read it. Major feat of MP is Messenger's Day—October 9th, 10-9! Other than that, they don't talk shop. A

MuniTimes Volume 2, Number 4  
free—Info from our arch-nemesis. Phenomenally worthless information about renovations, 7-day passports, and the big over story: new electronic farboxes! To quote Jack in Suburbia, "I hate buses." A

# Mercury Rising

November 1991

"Don't kill the messenger"

donation

## EXEC DUMPS BLUEPRINT



After next week we'll be seeing a lot fewer fluorescent green jackets on city streets. Citing heavy losses from accident claims, Executive Courier Network manager Joe Kent announced last month that Exec is terminating its contract to provide bicycle and scooter messengers for Blueprint Service Company, effective November 15.

Most of the 30 bikers and 12 scooter messengers will likely land with both tires on the pavement, however, according to Blueprint boss Jerry Fultz. A new company with a clean insurance slate has materialized to field a squad to work exclusively for Blueprint: Creative Delivery Systems. Says Fultz, "There should be sufficient positions at Creative for those who want to keep their jobs." Aeneas Special Delivery will handle the overflow and out-of-town tags.

The Blueprint crew has been in limbo for weeks, wondering if they'd still be employed by Thanksgiving. Said one, "I'm on work furlough, so I really need this job!" BPS is not a commission gravy-dog scene, but it's always been a place where a rookie could get hired.

Blueprint solicited bids from "just about every company in the phone book", says Fultz. "Many companies weren't interested in our business because they don't want to add a lot of new bikes." Insurance is the key reason. For 3 years, the Blueprint account had been based on paying bikers an hourly wage (starting at \$5/hour) to do work which was billed on a flat hourly rate. It didn't return a high profit margin per employee, according to Exec's Kent, who points out that ECN's Blueprint division also had a higher accident rate than the generally more experienced commission bikes. Exec is self-insured, says Kent, so settlements "all come straight out of (our) bottom line".

Creative Delivery will presumably be able to obtain less-than-stratospheric insurance rates based on its perfect record (just as the new Zap Courier will get a break from the old Special-T insurance rates). But if people start hitting the pavement too hard, too often, the insurance honeymoon will be over.

Jerry Fultz says he'll be working with Creative to develop "a system of longevity based on curtailing accidents". Here we offer our support. Safety is one issue on which SFBMA and the companies should be able to find some common ground.



# Mercury Rising

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Display Advertising:  
These rates are for camera-ready ads. We can design and typeset your ads for a reasonable fee.  
Business Card: \$10; Quarter-page: \$20; Half-page: \$40; Full-page: \$80.

Subscriptions:  
A year's subscription is \$6 within San Francisco. Since we are messengers, you can expect punctual hand-delivery. Subscription via the postal service is \$12.25. All contributors receive free copies.

## OMBIKESMAN

We've taken some heat about the appearance of the name "Doug A. Hitler" in our staff credits for issue #1. That was intended as a joke referring to Doug's firing from Pro-Mess for signing into a building as "A. Hitler". Our staff box is how we represent who we are to the outside world, so we apologize to those who got the wrong idea. Doug's no Hitler fan, nor are any of us at Merc.

We reported Pro-Mess manager Deb's scandalous, stupid, and ironic remark, "I'm not going to be racist about it, but that's just the way black men are" without making clear what our opinion on it was. Now you know. Also, she is not part owner.

Mercury Rising is published by a diverse group of people who loathe racism and sexism. We are determined to serve the whole bike messenger community, so we plan to be careful to make ourselves understood. And we invite everyone's input on this stuff. It's deadly serious!

Also, Fur's sorry he accused Executive of keeping 3 sets of books. That was an ill-advised wisecrack in the midst of a serious article. As far as we know, they probably keep books the legal way.

Greta Shred's magazine is Mudflap, not Mudflat, & we love it.

## Inside Contacts:



*The Monadnock: the old guard of our inside contacts.*

Hamilton, the senior lobby guard at 685 Market, is, as many of us know, great. He is one of the friendliest and most helpful lobby guards in the city. He and his former second in command, Ed, have built a most pleasurable atmosphere inside the Monadnock.

In '86 Hamilton was asked by the developer to leave his Blueprint job to come work as security for the Monadnock. Shortly after he was employed, he was then asked by the management to become an in-house messenger. He agreed, but only under one condition: if he could have helpers who could do the job well. Hamilton chose Ed and Jake, both former bicycle messengers. Ed has now moved on but Jake and Hamilton still carry on the flame.

Hamilton spends his spare time collecting photos of his favorite messengers. And Jake supplies his favorites with cookies. Hamilton also writes. He prepared the flyer now available about the history of the Monadnock building artwork: San Francisco Renaissance.

## SPOKES by Fur

### SELLING US BACK TO OURSELVES

The best deals tend to come from ourselves. Compare, for instance, Chris Hsiang's beautiful "Afghan Bike Messenger" t-shirt (inspired by a photo of a b.m. for the Mujahedin) with Lloyd Dangle's "Troubletown" model. Hsiang offers Hanes' Beefy-T longsleeves for \$10, with practically all the proceeds going to Bikes for Afghan Amputees Rehabilitation. (Look for a feature on B.A.A.R. in the December or January Merc.) The Dangle design is hilarious and wonderful, but he wants us, who provide the cultural fuel for his funniest strips- to pay fifteen bucks for an apparently short sleeved shirt! I have yet to see one on the street, though they've been available for months. Lloyd, when you're ready to drop the price to the \$8-10 range for messengers, hook up with Merc for an ad and I'll bet you move some shirts!

So there we were at Shahin's party a couple Saturdays ago. At least most of us got there before they started charging at the door. We bought drinks and toured the room, gazing at the pieces of our souls Shahin had stolen from us and had lovingly hung on the walls. "Bike Messenger Photo Show- see over 100 photos of them working in downtown SF." "Them" was the tip-off that it was an outside job. They were beautiful 8x10 color prints and some huge blowups. Nearly all had been taken without our knowledge.

If it had been Nick or F-stop or Dogpaw or anyone I knew on the other side of the camera, maybe it wouldn't have felt so strange. Shahin seems like a nice guy, though. "Maybe I should use your photo of me for my bike messenger trading card," I said as I shook his hand on the way out. He became serious. "I was thinking of making trading cards. Is someone doing that?"

The cards are going to have to cost money, but that's an SFBMA thing, so you can be sure that it's going to be as cheap as possible. Get your data sheet in and get photographed as soon as you can, 'cause it's just about deadline! Parté King of Exec. has the sheets. You can give them to him, Nosmo, or any of the extended King family. If you don't know who these people are, just start asking everyone wearing Exec. shirts!

Jackson Park lunch, lovely early fall day. Having a nice quiet video interview for Wella and Seth's documentary. Chatting pleasantly about subculture when an UNGODLY ROAR STILLS ALL TONGUES! Blue fucking macho punk Angels- jet pilots who might have the skills to do something useful, like messenge- split the SF sky open and make it bleed. All over town heads whirl, jaws drop, car hits car, bike hits ped, car hits bike, ped hits ped (jet hits city?). What's left of public safety has been pre-empted for a sickening display of gas-guzzling flag-waving war-game. Tens of thousands of SF

citizens, who came from parts of the world where they really use these toys, must find this a pretty perverse form of entertainment.

The video-doc is an outside job, but Wella's been on the scene for a few months off-and-on, and she's starting to ask some pretty good questions...

Another classic b.m. vid-doc, Molly Barker and Lynda Nakashima's "Proof of Delivery," is now available for sale at a very reasonable price. P.O.D. is a tightly-edited 30 minute exploration into how the business actually works as well as its characters and culture. It only scratches the surface, but it's great, I think. This place called Video Signal in Sunnyvale has P.O.D. for \$16.95. Call 1-800-245-6717 and ask for video # 14355. Tell 'em Fur sent ya.

But that's not all, folks! My honey, Cookie Hammett, is going to put out the SF Bike Messenger Cookbook. It's about getting the best-tasting highest nutrition for the least money, for people who are too tired to cook. It will include local sources for cheap supplies, and suggestions to make cooking more trouble-free. She wants to include lots of drawings, photos and stuff, so if anybody wants to contribute art, let me know! Make sure it has your name and phone # on the back (the same goes for Merc art contributions, and if you want you can contribute a piece to both publications). If the cookbook makes a profit, all contributors get a little piece of the pie!

Mercury Rising costs 50 cents, but it's our policy to give it away to any messenger who doesn't have the change, or to people who have something we want. If you ever feel like tossing in an extra quarter to subsidize this rag, that's cool.

Company memorabilia is changing hands for money, too. Old U.S. Mess license plates have been sold for as much as 5 bucks or a six-pack, and the owner of a company actually approached me recently asking for my company's client list. He was willing to pay a hundred bucks. Must be a dedicated collector! I declined, though. My employer still very much exists, and I wouldn't want the company that splits mostly well-priced tags 50-50 with me and provides me with accident insurance to lose any clients to a low bidder.

Rick Byrd used to get paid for charging up Nob Hill, but when he took 5th in the California Mile last month there was no prize! Like not getting paid for a hot rush dry run. Congrats, anyway.

As Bike Messenger culture flowers, are we buying and selling pieces of a soon-to-be defunct and nostalgized way of life, or are these yet the early years of biking? The answer may depend on us. Or...not.



## Mercury Rising Called "Evil" at AMCS Convention

Having attended conferences myself, I was not surprised at what I saw at the Association of Messenger and Courier Services (abbreviated AMCS—pronounce "Ab-

**"When I first saw your magazine, I said to myself, I wish those people would use their energy for good instead of evil"**

**Joel Ritch, ProMess**

-cess") convention at the Wharf Holiday Inn last Saturday, November 2:

1. A bunch of very dressed up people, clapping politely for Jo Murray of Jo Murray Public Relations, most of whom probably just wanted to get out of L.A. for a weekend;
2. The local office employees who were casting their eyes about the room, mostly at the floor, as if looking for a secret exit or trapdoor, and pulling at their collars;
3. The local company bosses, the most casually dressed contingent and the one that seemed to be having the best time, mingling and otherwise being very friendly and hospitable.

Except for the boss of my company: he says hi to me at work all the time, so maybe he felt seeing me on a Saturday was too much of a good thing.

Anyway, I was more interested in talking to Joel Ritch, Pro Mess owner. I have heard from several different Pro Mess messengers that not only did commissions go down, rates also went down, so they are making less and less money.

The rates ProMess quotes over the phone are the same as those on their rate sheet, but who knows what they are charging their discount clients. Pro Mess does not tell their messengers what the rates are, even if they ask, so talking to Joel seemed like the only way to find out if rates had been lowered.

Joel and I never spoke during the time I worked for him; I think I am not alone in this, in fact I would venture to say that I never saw or heard of any messenger talking to him in my admittedly short two and a half months there. So I felt a little apprehensive as I patiently stood next to him while he was being friendly and hospitable with various conference goers. I boldly followed him downstairs waiting to break in to a conversation. Finally I intruded upon his consciousness, asked for a minute of his time, which he graciously conceded. He asked my name. He asked my last name. He asked who I was with. Upon hearing the words Mercury Rising, the color in his face seemed also to rise, and his voice got louder. He said, "When I saw your magazine, I just said to myself, why can't those people use their energy for good instead of evil?"

I wondered what was evil about it, but I didn't have an opportunity to ask, because he was explaining to me the good things we should be doing: "Messenger companies have an image problem. If we could sit down with you people, and talk to you, we could charge the client more, because the perceived value would be greater."

The article for Pro Mess was evil and unbalanced, for it didn't mention all the things Pro Mess did for their employees:

good pay, benefits—here I had to interrupt. Pro Mess gives its bike messengers benefits? I wanted to get mine. No, he conceded, bike messengers do not get benefits. But we are irresponsible reporters! Deb is not part owner of Pro Mess! I apologized for this error, and pointed out that it was not the main point of the article. Did that mean he agreed with the facts of the rest of the article? He would not say anything about it now, it was too late. We should have come to him before, told him that we had heard allegations of sexual harassment at Pro Mess, and he would have talked to us, and we would have "written a nice article." He asked us what our article was based on. Amerigo laughed and said, "Life experience." (At some point, Bongo and Amerigo found me and became witnesses to this conversation.)

He claimed that the messengers had "confused" the commission cut with a rate cut. I kept asking him to comment on the truth of the sexual harassment allegations, finally he said, "Of course it's not true! If someone is being sexually harassed, that person should not be working at my company! It could leave me open to a lawsuit!" He had thoroughly investigated the allegation and it was false. How did he investigate, I wanted to know? He talked to Deb and Larry. He claimed to have four women bike messengers working for him (they must be quadruplets who never hang out together, 'cause I only see one) and they all told him they didn't have any problems. I was starting to get offended by this bullshit. Did he ask any women who used to work there? Did he ask any woman why she quit?

"Why should I? They're gone."

We were obviously not as "gone" as JR would have liked us to be, because when the three of us announced our intention to go hear the sexual harassment workshop, he told us we couldn't go, unless we paid twenty dollars apiece. This, he said, was to be fair to the other participants (who got sent by their companies!). I would have backed down, but Bongo told him we had been invited by Kathleen Hunt, the lawyer giving the workshop, and that AMCS Joe Kent said we could go, and that we were going, which he immediately demonstrated by climbing the stairs. Amerigo and I followed, and we sat through a very interesting, hour-long presentation on the laws concerning sexual harassment. The only concern the participants, from their questions, seemed to have about this issue was that it not cost them any money. The human impact, the depressing feel of an office where someone is using their power on someone else, did not seem to occur to them. I also saw why Joel Ritch did not want us to hear this information.

After that, we talked briefly to Jim Dunk of Silver Bullet, who praised last month's Mercury Rising, saying he had "expected a lot of misspelled words". Randy of Pro Mess told us he would keep us informed of what was happening there. Then we left.

We only went to less than two hours of the convention. We missed State Senator Quentin Kopp, we missed the Hornblower Yacht cruise, we missed management workshops. One thing we missed that we would particularly have liked to have seen was the presentation by Robert Hulteng, Esq., from the union-busting firm of Litler, Mendelson. (I have heard that a bike messenger once got fired for writing "Go, Teamsters, Go!" on a package he delivered to them) on the topic "Ways To Avoid

Employment Litigation". Even though we didn't hear it, we have our own suggestions:

1. Treat your employees fairly.
2. Be honest.

-Pelona



## Hard Luck

The S.F.B.M.A. Hard Luck series continues at Brave New World (1751 Fulton at Masonic) Sunday November 17th, with a benefit for two bicycle messengers, Stephan and Hugh, who, through separate accidents of fate, have found themselves with unexpected financial burdens. This is the second event of the Series, raising solidarity and raising hell on the streets of San Francisco. In addition to intoxicating dance music spun by STEWART, there will be live performances by SCOUT'S HONOR, L. SID, and MOUNTAIN PIG.

Scout's Honor is music that will rock your genitalia and this is the last chance to catch these local hard core giants for a while, as they will take a break to pursue individual projects after Sunday's show. Interestingly enough, it is also one of the first opportunities you will have to check out Scout's Honor's new singer. L. Sid will add their twisted brand of acid funk and swing to the night's line up and Tucson band Mountain Pig will open the mayhem.

Every Sunday Stewart's new club, BABYLON, will take over Brave New World, breaking through the narrow formats of techno-reggae-hip-hop-industrial dance clubs and creating an awareness of dance music built on the interdependence of these and other styles. As spun by Stewart, BABYLON brings you music you can bug out to. Start the week with a new hangover!

First band begins at 9 pm. Admission: \$3-5—all \$ raised goes to Hugh and Stephan. For more information contact Stewart at 648-4126 or write to 3129 22nd Street, SF 94110.





## Stay on 2 Wheels

by Malatesta

19th C.  
Italian  
Anarchist

As messengers, we are a highly visible community whose future depends heavily on the promotion of bicycles, check?! Every day more people everywhere are realizing the advantages of pedal power, yet many remain discouraged by a society largely ignorant and hostile towards bicyclists and their rights. Buckling under to the interests of big business, our government continues to reinforce this nausea with: sexy oil-guzzling energy and transportation policies that perpetually subsidize the freeway gridlock libido cancer industry...Get the Fuck Outta My Way, it's high time we added our chain driven ambition into the mix...think about it! A network to keep us informed, active and unified would benefit us greatly. A voice for our anger, an effective vehicle for our bicycle moxie!

The fight to make our streets safe for bikes is fueled not only by our vision and desire, but also the painful memory of too many friends maimed, crushed and killed by reckless Buicks, Fords and BMWs. The death last year of Richard Dreger was a loss we have yet to recover from. An avid bicyclist and venerable S.F. messenger, Rick was murdered most brutally by a DUI hit and run asshole in San Diego. The disturbing details of the accident clearly illustrate the danger and injustice of horse-powered atrocities...

Collision Report no. DO21382

0 feet: Initial Contact Point. Start of skid from bicycle tire.

4'4": End of skid mark.

68'2": Left shoe.

106'5": Begin fabric scuff. (This scuff, created by some part of Rick's shoes or clothing, ends 400 feet later.)

112'9": Knapsack from bicycle.

138'11": Rick's eyeglasses.

153'11": Front axle of bike at rest.

202'1": Rear axle of bike at rest.

301'2": Styro bicycle helmet.

498'1": End of fabric scuff.

498'1": Body point of rest.

The owner of the murder weapon (a '75 Chevy) was later identified to the police by concerned neighbors who heard a drunken confession and spotted him cleaning blood off the front of the car. He was an alcoholic with four prior DUI's and

outstanding warrants. He had no driver's license nor auto insurance and was not apprehended because of a lack of witnesses to pinpoint him as the driver at the time of the accident. Rick was cited as having no rear reflectors and listed as the driver most at fault...yet he was wearing cycling shorts coated with reflective material tested to be visible from 2000 feet and the seat-stays of his bike had 10 square inches of red reflector tape on them. The police did not even impound the offending car. What we are left with is a chilling collision report, a profound sense of sorrow and loss, and the fact that the killer is still free to crawl behind the wheel of his '75 Chevy. (In 1989 alone, U.S. highway slaughter claimed the lives of almost 4,000 bicyclists and over 6,500 pedestrians!)

This article is dedicated to Big Rick, and I hope we can keep an on-going forum in this magazine to help spotlight ideas and opportunities for SFBMA members to further empower bicyclists everywhere. For instance, letter writing. If one person from each bike crew could cattle-prod his co-workers into writing letters and advocating bicycles, we could deliver some interesting mail to our friendly elected officials!

Currently, our Congress is slowly stumbling through the reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act (S.T.A.A.)...which is notoriously concerned with reckless over-paving at our over-taxed expense, there are actually some pending resolutions/bills worthy of note towards bicyclists this year...

**H.R. 2102 - The Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Act of 1991**—perhaps the most ambitious resolution, introduced by Joe Kennedy (D-MA) is based on the 3% initiative sponsored by bicycle lobbyists. That is, state highway departments would be obliged to spend 3% of funds that the states receive yearly from the federal budget on bikes and peds. This would amount to at least 100 million dollars.

**H.R. 2267** - introduced by Jim Oberstar (D-MN)—this bill would require state highway departments to include provision for bicyclists in their highway designs. It also would require each state to have a full-time "Bicycle Coordinator".

**H.R. 2869** - introduced by Peter DeFazio, D-OR), involved elements of both the above and calling for "A billion of bikes" !?! (Gee, whiz? And swollen cranks...)

As the House and the Senate dicker over these important issues, maybe we need to treat them to a free lunch in Jackson Park before they finalize the STAA at the end of the month!

At a more local level, it should be noted that the San Francisco Bicycle Advisory Committee (SF BAC) was created by the Board of Supervisors in 1990 to help promote safe sharing of the roadways and develop a plan for bicycle related improvements in the city, i.e. bicycle routes, secure parking and transit-bicycle interface. They also recommend action on funding for such bicycle projects and advise improvements in city policies, programs and goals. The SF BAC meets monthly, all meetings are open and the public is invited to attend. Agendas are posted in front of Room 235, City Hall at

least 72 hours before each meeting. Check it out. Our knowledge of the streets needs to be represented at these city-sponsored soirees! The next full SF BAC meeting is Thursday, November 21, 5:45 P.M. at 450 McAllister, Room 605.

Our bicycles afford us a healthy self-determination and a liberty to move about freely that is indeed revolutionary. It is time to demand a change in misguided transportation policies—time to recognize the bicycle as America's true Freedom Machine!





## Lickety Split Delivery

I WISH THERE WAS AN ALL WOMEN'S MESSENGER COMPANY-

"There is."

I WANT TO WORK THERE

"-but I think it's out of business."

It's not out of business. Lickety Split Delivery is run out of the Mission apartment of Lynn Breedlove. LSD has two bikes, one car, and one motorcycle, plus "on-call" bikes. All of the messengers are women. "Women need the chance to ride with other women," Breedlove explains. Some of LSD's clients choose them solely for their role in abating sexism. "When women's businesses find out about us, they want us right away."

LSD's clients include women's businesses, the California Abortion Rights League, AIDS groups, tenant advocacy groups in the Mission, and a legal service for children. LSD has Starving Artists rates for organizations that rely on donations for support. LSD has no corporate clients. "I'm totally anti-corporation. They don't need my help." Breedlove strongly believes in doing work for the community, providing service to non-profits and small businesses, especially women's businesses. "Women need their own means of support, to free us to create our art, our community."

A male friend of Breedlove's called her sexist for denying him a job at LSD. "Affirmative action is a bridge to an equal society. Just like whites have to take responsibility for what they've done to blacks, men have to take responsibility for what they've done to women. It's too bad, to have to be born in a certain time, in a certain role..."

"Why should we apologize? We're just taking back what's ours."

To be able to decide who she delivered to was one of the reasons Lynn Breedlove started Lickety Split. After college, she considered going to law school, but the stuffy, unhappy people she saw in the law firms she made deliveries for in the year and a half she worked at Western made her decide against it. She liked messeng'ing, "I so love riding my bike. I'm enamored of the idea of getting paid to ride my bike," but it began to bother her that she was doing deliveries for Esso and Chevron. She was also sick of "dealing with shitheads who gave me lousy tags." Western "overcharges and overhires. To keep five beige-clad messengers waiting at the wall, ready to jump on any tag, they have to charge a lot."

The atmosphere at Lickety Split is very different from that at Western. "We are like a family. There's love here." Lynn's two two wheeled messengers, Danielle and Jo, work with her, not for her. Danielle even tells of times when she has done everything from dispatching to research work. She understands Lynn's need for dedicated persons to help keep alive the ideal of an all woman messenger service. And Danielle and Jo fill the bill.

Danielle, LSD's first full time bicycle messenger, first met Lynn several years ago while Breedlove was still working

at Western.

She had heard of Lynn's idea and reminded her to look her up once she decided to get going.

On May 1st, International Workers' Day, they started working together. And things have been rolling along ever since.

"Lynn is a kind and honest person, and will respect your opinion," says Danielle of her chief. "She lets me do the work in my own way, routing things out how I like." Lynn trusts that Danielle can handle all aspects of the job, which earns Danielle 60% of all deliveries. Lynn also, as a biker herself, understands the stress of the job. There are no guilt trips when messengers can't make it in. Once Danielle had cramps so bad she couldn't ride. But Lynn understood and gave her the time off. Even when things get difficult with clients, Lynn is just as thoughtful. She told Danielle, after complaining about the treatment by a client, "Just don't deal with them. I'd rather you be happy than badmouth a client."

Danielle is also a salesperson, and has distributed flyers to perspective customers. She says she has gotten only a few negative responses when people learn that her company is woman own and operated.

Recently business has picked up (partly because of Herb Caca's mentioning of LSD in a September column) and Breedlove has had to put another biker on call. Denise is the newest member of LSD's family of Sisterly Love. Maybe with new accounts Lynn can further extend her family. She would one day like to employ any and every woman biker that would like to would like to work with her.

Lynn first doubted her ability to make her own business. Now she feels, "With hard work and faith, I can create something that doesn't yet exist."

-Bongo and Pelona



## SO YOU'RE RIDING DOWN THE STREET AND GET CRUNCHED... WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

If you are injured—whether it be on a bike, on foot, or while driving a car, you must first ask yourself two questions: 1) Did the accident happen while you were working?, and 2) Whose fault was it?

If the accident took place while you were working, your employer MUST pay for your medical expenses. Additionally, if the health care practitioner you see indicates that you are unable to work for a certain period of time, the employer must pay for your lost time from work (This will usually be less than you normally make, because it's based on 2/3 of your average earnings).

The employer is liable for these expenses, regardless of whose fault the accident was; it has a statutory obligation to pay for injuries that occur on the job. It also has a legal obligation to carry workers' compensation insurance. One issue which may legitimately arise is: Were you working? For example, generally speaking, accidents which occur on the way to and from work are not covered.

If your employer refuses to pay for your medical bills, or gives you some song and dance about not being able to afford it, or brings up the issue of who was at fault, you should contact a workers' compensation attorney.

Workers' Compensation is a highly specialized field. By law, attorneys are only allowed to accept a small percentage (I believe usually 10%) of the recovery as payment. The reasoning for this is that the system is supposed to function without attorneys. Unfortunately, employers are frequently jerks and the only way to protect your rights is by retaining an attorney. Do not accept representation from anyone who does not have several years of experience in the field, preferably a "State Bar Certified Specialist".

If you are injured away from the job OR on the job but the injuries were serious enough that mere payment of medical expenses and wage loss will not adequately compensate you AND the accident was mostly or partly someone else's fault, you should consider starting a personal injury claim.

In the case of an accident that occurs on the job, the principle difference between a workers' comp claim and a personal injury claim is that in order to file a personal injury claim the other person(s) must be at fault.

A personal injury claim allows you to recover additional damages. For example, let's say that in addition to being a messenger, you are also a drummer in a band and you are involved in an accident and sustain a foot injury which not only keeps you from riding a bike for 3 weeks but also keeps you from practicing with your band for a month and makes you miss three gigs. Or let's say you are involved in an accident and your back is injured. You are unable to have sex with your significant other for several weeks. Both of these types of "injuries" may be compensable as "special damages".

How do attorneys and insurance companies decide how much to compensate for such non-medical injuries?

Computations are generally based to some degree on your total medical bills. If there is any way to put a monetary value on the injuries, that will also be taken into account in determining a figure. For example, how much would you have been paid for the missed gigs?

Money damages may also be awarded for "pain and suffering". Again, this is usually based largely on the amount of your medical bills. The reasoning is that if your injuries were serious enough that you incurred \$3,000 in medical bills, you must have experienced pain and suffered to the tune of at least a few hundred dollars.

Obviously, this system is not only subjective but also offensive in that it requires that a monetary value be put on EVERYTHING, but if you want to get money out of the insurance companies, you just have to live with it.

So what do you do if you are involved in an accident and think you may have a personal injury claim? First, don't say anything to anybody (especially the cops or the person who hit you) indicating that you were in any way to blame for the accident. Although theoretically you can recover [losses] if the accident was only partly the fault of the other person, the reality is that for small cases, it's not worth it for an attorney to take the case if there is an issue of you being partly at fault.

Second, get the cops involved. Make sure that an accident report gets completed and make a good strong statement on it about how the whole thing was the other guy's fault (but only if it's true, of course).

Third, find out if the other party has insurance. If they do not, it is probably not worth pursuing, unless they are pretty wealthy—which is usually not the case with uninsured motorists.

Fourth, seek medical treatment IMMEDIATELY. If you have ugly, unsightly injuries or bruises, take pictures. Also take pictures of anything else that seems relevant, such as the crash site or the damage to your bike or vehicle.

Fifth, see an attorney as soon as possible, preferably within the first week after the accident. Ifs/he agrees to take your case, s/he will take it on a contingent fee basis. In other words, if you don't win the case, you do not pay anything. The average contingency percentage is 30-40% of the total recovery. The percentage usually goes up if it is necessary to actually file suit and may go up even more if it is necessary to take the case to court, which rarely happens in minor personal injury cases.

In closing, I hope you never need any of this information.

-Camille Kim Cook

Camille Kim Cook is an attorney in solo practice who handles personal injury and immigration cases. She is also a bike messenger's sister.





## This is Your Company on Drugs

If you want a job at Executive Courier, you've got to piss in a cup. The new drug testing program debuted in October has, unsurprisingly, slowed the flow of applicants, according to manager Joe Kent. So far the program, administered by Bay Medical, is only for new hires. Testing may be expanded to random and post-accident situations, but all who were hired before the program started are exempt. Kent says he's personally opposed to random testing, but likes the post-accident idea, which has the potential to release the company from liability for accident settlements in the event of positive test (presumably the drug-addled messenger would then be on the hook).

Kent hinted that a positive test for only marijuana might not preclude one's hiring. Noting that the Yerba Buena stays present in samples for more than a week after indulging, he offered, "People have the right to do what they want on their own time. I just don't want them doing this on the job."

-Fur



Marijuana is smoked in small pipes or rolled into cigarettes which are sometimes held by "roach clips".



Marijuana is sold in plastic bags or in hand rolled cigarettes called "joints".

## A Story of HANX...

...is basically the tale of a bunch of working stiff style bike messengers who were either too uncoordinated to ride a skateboard or too broke to buy one. The need for such an aggregation was doubtful as much as its usefulness was nonexistent, but it did provide the opportunity for the creation of some of the most prolifically festooned sleeveless denims ever seen. (I'm talkin' about your colors, you non-thesaurus reading chump!) Probably the best of these and unquestionably the most painstakingly designed and executed belonged to Jason, aka J-Bone. His unique insignia consisted of several hundred safety pins formed in a circle around the word HANX, also made from safety pins. The visual effect was dazzling, even though the weight of the pins made it feel more like a flak jacket than riding attire. A photo of J-Bone in his colors was used for an Image magazine article. A full-size print of it still hangs at his final gig in California (he now has his own company in Denver): Aspen Graphics at 200 Green.

One "problem" with colors which allegedly caused most companies to ban them under threat of termination was keeping them clean. Not of mere dirt and grime, mind you, but of long, hot days of sweat and even longer nights of beer. Laundering colors was unthinkable—unheard of—sacrilege! However, it did occur with conjugally connected HANX; Bob "18" Bennett and Carl "Dung Boy" Carpenito being two of the most affected. When the noble garments became too odoriferous for their non-messenger nostrils (or when the damn things just plain stank to high heaven) Patty and Robyn would simply toss them in with the rest of the week's wash, completely disregarding the rare embroidered keepsake patches sewn thereupon and sometimes, depending on the state of rancidity, any painted metal stickpins accompanying them.

This fortunately was the exception and not the rule, as it was customary for many a HANX member to have his colors signed by other members. Washing them then would have made this practice not only pointless, but absolutely stupid!

Well, that's one story of the HANX. Not bad for filler, if you think about it! If anyone else has another, send it in! You supply the story, I'll supply the syntax (that's a word you'll find in another book you've never read!) Till then, I'm

-Professor Grifter,  
-The Pedaling Pedagogue



Common ways to store and conceal marijuana.

ROBERT H MENDELSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.  
2001 UNION STREET  
SUITE 610  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94121  
415-885-1001 FAX 415-885-0672

October 11, 1991

Mayor Art Agnos  
City Hall  
Room 200  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mayor Agnos:

There exists within the City a unique group of individuals whose only function is to keep the wheels of commerce moving smoothly and efficiently. I'm referring to the bike messengers of San Francisco.

Day in and day out, our bike messengers speed information across the City, up it's hills and down its alleys, carrying the City's business on flashing wheels. Bike messengers are an integral part of the City's business machinery. Whether it's delivering vital documents or picking up the last available pair of tickets for a 49ers game, bike messengers do it best with a flaring and bravado worthy of Robin Hood. They are true urban heroes, fiercely independent, always on the fringes of respectability, but scrupulously honest in the handling of their deliveries. These men and women put their lives on the line every day so that the business of the City can proceed uninterrupted.

As one of the few U.S. cities fortunate enough to have bike messengers, it is well past the time for San Francisco to honor them with their own special day. Let's devote one day to show these messengers - our colleagues - that their efforts are appreciated by those of us conducting business in San Francisco. Therefore, I urge you to create a Bike Messenger Appreciation Day to honor the hard work, dedication, and sheer style these people contribute to the City of San Francisco.

Sincerely,

*Marilee Montgomery*  
Marilee Montgomery  
Administrative Assistant

:mtm  
cc



October 16, 1991

Office of the Mayor  
San Francisco

Mr. Marilee Montgomery  
Robert Mendelson & Associates, Inc.  
2001 Union Street, Suite 610  
San Francisco, California 94121

Dear Mr. Montgomery:

Thank you for letting me know about your support for San Francisco designating a special "Day" - saving its colorful bicycle messengers - maintaining the flow of goods and information in our very busy city.

I certainly would consider having a city and county proclamation designating such a "Day" in their honor. In order for such a proclamation to be meaningful and gain citywide attention it would be helpful for bike messengers to make an effort to identify an appropriate date. Then they could sponsor an event or series of events that could each year mark in a special way the celebration honoring the role of our bike messengers.

I look forward to hearing more about your proposal.

Sincerely,  
*Art Agnos*  
ART AGNOS

AA/mtm

MERCURY RISING'S  
ADDRESS IS: 504 Mission #152  
SF CA 94105  
LWRITE  
L45!

S.F. Bike Messenger  
Appreciation Day  
October 9th!!  
-10-9?

Congrats, Mess Press!  
San Francisco Chronicle

Count me in, Marilee!  
Thanks and cheers.

October 18, 1991

All best regards,  
*Art Agnos*



## ON BEING AN AERODITE

Having worked for Aero Special Delivery for three and a half years, I have ambiguous feelings toward the company. I have several contentions about the policies of Aero, and yet like many, I continue under their employ. Many of these policies stem from the fact that Aero has grown from a small personal company to corporate status.

Back in May 1988, I joined the Aero crew with the buyout of Sparkie's (snicker, snicker). At that time the company had a fifth the number of messengers and dispatchers. Everyone knew each other, the atmosphere was informal, and yet there was money to be made. Slowly, the "re-shaping" of Aero began. Management wanted to clean up the look so as to gain more clients. Enter then the new general manager Bob B., ex-messenger/dispatcher. Orlando went on a two week vacation, leaving Bob B. at the helm, to return to an almost completely refurbished crew. Consequently, almost all the new bikers were rookies, and some had no business being on the streets. Bob B had been given the task of eliminating HANX members from the crew for whatever reasons he could conjure up for firing them. Many were told simply to "swing-by": RKO Radio, Robert, Spaz, Charles, and even Dorian, who was not a member of HANX but was considered not up to par for the new "look" of Aero (nevermind the fact that Dory never missed a day of work, nor did he have to write down a single lag till the end of the day). So the change had begun and things only got worse. Sure, the company acquired more clients and more messengers. And more messengers. And more messengers.

So, three and a half years later Aero has come full circle in that they fired many a knowledgeable messenger because they were "scums" only to replace them with blue-clad, semi-fresh-faced idiots. Every day is a new hiring experience for Aero. The turnover rate is ludicrous. The management argues that they must keep hiring because messengers keep quitting—and yet they will not concede to the fact that the main reason they quit is because they can't make any money. In the words of my friend, the inimitable RKO Radio: "Aero doesn't hire; they enlist."

Anyone who has worked at Aero—and I'm certain that there are many of you out there—will agree that Aero delivery rates are at the bottom of the barrel, if not altogether underneath the barrel. Aero has done more to undercut the messenger market than any other company in the city. This is another point to which Aero management will not concede. Hey, I know that things are tough all over, but no one suffers more than the messenger. This is something about which Aero management—namely Frank Brewer, Sr.—could care less. To him, every messenger is a faceless number, a dispensable peon. His concern isn't that a messenger make a living, nor is it even providing solid service for Aero clients; it is making as much money in the business as possible. And so, with this disdainful attitude toward messengers in general, Frank Brewer, Sr. arrives one Friday night at a local messenger bar wielding a hundred dollar bill and calling for beers to quench the thirsts of

all "his" hard-working messengers. Such a shallow and disgusting display I have never seen. However, this is indicative of the attitude of Aero: ignore the real needs of the employees and attempt to placate the unwashed masses occasionally with some sort of bribe.

The task of changing the attitudes of Aero, or any messenger company, lies squarely in the hands of the messenger. Companies like Aero depend upon the knowledge that messengers desperately need what little money they do make, thus dismissing the notion of a general strike of any sort. But such action may be necessary, or messengers will continue to be an exploited group.

You may be asking at this point why I continue to work for Aero Special Delivery (I often ask myself). Truth be known, I am still there because I work for the man whom I consider to be the best dispatcher in the business.

- C. Betz



## Another Employee Ripped Off

When trying to get a glimpse into the world of Aero, I asked people what Aero's good points were. Derisive laughter was the most common response.

The largest, older messenger company must have some good point and after extensive investigation I found it out: they have a shower. Excellent! All companies should be so insightful; however, with one shower among 160 employees, Aero messengers end up smelling like the rest of us.

Other than that good point, Aero's a place where you can always get a job—no matter what your age or race, sexual or drug preference is, whether you know how ride a bike or not—just as long as you don't have a beard. Particularly, it's a good place to get a job if you just got out of jail. One such soul landed a job as a handtruck-walker. First day of work he loaded up his handtruck with 600 pounds of office equipment that he was told to deliver. The industrious young man wheeled his truck into 685 Market, asked guard to look after it, and then made his way to the liquor store. Three o' clock in the afternoon, this soul sailed into 242 Steuart and proclaimed himself clean. His dispatcher was not impressed and promising career died in infancy.

Due to hirings and firings Aero has a turn-over rate that would make your head spin, but some have the tenacity to hang on. Friedman is the best example. He is 55 and bikes to work everyday from his house in Glen Park. His recipe for success is tomatoes and green peppers, which he eats daily. In recognition of his hard work, the company gave him his own aerobike.

Not only does Aero reward employees for hard work, they also will listen to employees' appeals, if expressed in the proper way. An Aero biker who perpetually smokes cigars, threatened that if management tried to fuck with him, he'd burn them. When Aero saw fit to fire him, he took his cigar and unceremoniously burn an Aero office worker on the leg. So they let keep his job.

Yes, Aero is flexible about jobs and flexible about commission rates too! Bikers and walkers make 50%; scooters make a surprisingly low 40%. But, after missing a day of work, rates plunge 10% to 40% and 30% respectively. And if you're out due to an accident, you lose 5% of your commission on what you've already earned. Harsh toke, but that's probably the only way Aero keeps from going broke.

If you find accidents exciting, Aero is the company for you! Popular wisdom holds that Aero has the highest accident rate of any company. And who hasn't run into an Aero biker? To curb this, there are Saturday safety meetings, mandatory for new employees and anyone who has gotten into an accident recently, and Aero management takes these meetings seriously. An ex-Aerohead got a job there, after three days got into an accident and was out for the rest of the week. When he showed up for work on Monday, he was fired for not attending the Saturday safety meeting.

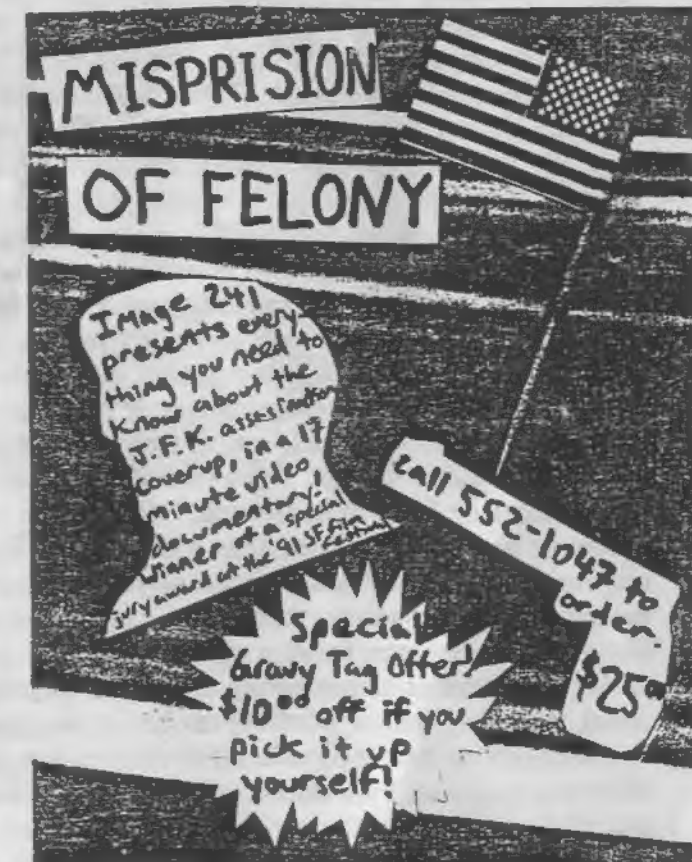
The problem lies not only in hiring rookies, but in giving them dangerous weapons. These objects are yellow, ugly, and—when stripped of seats and wheels—weigh exactly 66.6 pounds. A demonic force propels them on the streets, through traffic, and

into other vehicles.

One can hazard a guess that the demonic power of Aero bikes is only a small part of an even scarier whole, but maybe the Lord will forgive them for the Aeror of their ways.

Aero was too huge of a project. Next issue we'll set our sights on a smaller company: Silver Bullet! Are they really as anal-retentive as people say? How big is Stefan's ego? Write in with your tales of glory and woe, even if it's just Silly Bullshit.

-Amerigo





## Rain Safety

-or-

### How Not to Become One for the Meat Graters

by F-Stop

Hi, Kidz! It's that time of year again, that time the trees, grass, flowers, reservoirs, and myself have been praying for, THE MONSOON SEASON! Buoyed by reports and rumors of the return of El Nifio and more rain this winter than in the previous 7 combined, I'm looking forward to a GOOD one this year! As any experienced messenger knows, the gravy flows like a river for those brave enough to endure during the wet season, but, alas and alackaday, the chances of being involved in a nasty accident also increase dramatically. So that's why I've taken pen in hand to pass on my two cents' worth on how to make slugging in the rain a lot safer and maybe even fun.

1) Bike maintenance: Of utmost importance! Especially the brakes. Make sure the cables and housings are in prime condition (no cracks or fraying) and are well greased (not too much, though; that attracts dirt and grit, which causes cracks and fraying). A good light coat is best. Also, keep your wheels as true as possible, because then the brake shoes can be set as close as possible without rubbing against the rim. This allows for quicker, stronger braking.

Serious consideration should be given to using an old-style 1-speed coaster brake bomber with a full metal basket. Their weight and low center of gravity make them extremely stable, even in the wet; plus the fact that a coaster brake is sealed inside a hub, which makes it much more impervious to the slippery elements than exposed caliper brakes. It may be wise to add one of those to the front, though, (and also to the rear, if you're really fanatical) to assist the coaster brake in its function. The ultimate rain brakes are hand-lever operated drum brakes (Atom, Sturmey Archer, et al.). Putting one of those on your bike is like putting an eighteen-wheeler brake on a car. The more braking power the better, I always say. They're pricey, and having one installed means having to build or rebuild a wheel, but it may well be worth the trouble. If you insist upon using caliper brakes periodically as you're riding, put the brakes on just until you start to slow down. This clears a lot of the excess water from your pads and rims. And as far as the question of full metal baskets goes, sure, they're

a little extra weight, wind drag, and make it a little harder to slip between the gaps of the downtown gridlock, etc., but they provide INVALUABLE protection in collisions for both yourself and your ride—whether it's a tanker from antediluvian times or an ultra-modern high-tech feather-weight—and that is no small matter to consider, given that bad weather increases the idiot factor in drivers about tenfold.

Enough on brakes and baskets; now on to chains and tires. Keep the chain clean and free of rust. After each day of riding in the slop, wipe down, allow to dry, and lube (preferably with a heavier lube) your chain, also your derailleur if you have them. And don't forget any exposed brake/derailleur cables. Wipe them down and regrease them as needed.

Now, tires. I will not join the controversy concerning slicks versus treads in the rain. I swear by my slicks in any weather; that's all I'll say on that matter. But no matter what sort of tires you ride, safety is greatly increased by running the tires at or no more than slightly above the minimum rated pressure. My own experience has been that reducing the tire pressure in this way makes a world of difference in stopping and maneuvering on wet road and yes, even on the dreaded wet manhole covers and steel plates. Try it and see for yourself.

Now we come to everybody's favorite issue: flat tires (the pox upon 'em!). Kevlar is the greatest thing since indoor plumbing, Mr. Tuffy's are a great help; but still, flats happen—more often in the rain than during dry weather. So if you value your time and sanity carry one (maybe two) extra tubes with you. If you've ever tried to make a patch stick during a deluge, you know exactly what I mean.

The way to stay alive and unhurt is simply to use a little common sense. The seriousness of any accident that you may be involved in (the gentry forbid) is magnified by your rate of speed, so it behooves any self-respecting individual to ride slowly and very cautiously, always being aware of the much-increased idiot factor on the part of drivers. Cross railroad/streetcar tracks at as close to a 90° (perpendicular) angle as possible. You could even WALK your bike across the more gnarly railroad tracks. Take NO unnecessary chances. COAST very slowly across manhole covers and steel cover plates. DO NOT brake, change speed, or shift your weight, or you will probably go down. It is preferable to avoid these things if at all possible, and, for the love of the gods, avoid the meat graters (the BART grates, to you rookies) fastidiously. A good rule of thumb is to avoid Market Street altogether if you can. Another tip is if you use toe clips, remove the straps. This makes it much easier to bail out of the pedals and land on your feet, should your bike go out from under you. All of this means that it is going to take somewhat longer to pick up and deliver, but,

no matter WHAT your dispatcher says, there is no tag worth getting killed over.

Enough on safety. Now let's move on to comfort, or how to catch maybe just a cold and not pneumonia. In one word: WOOL. Wool is wondrous. I am forever grateful for buying a Canadian army "Ike jacket" the night before the 1990 Russian River Slugfest, which those who survived it remember as the most drenched River ride ever. I got soaked, to be sure, but that wondrous wool jacket kept me warm and comfortable the whole way. Based on that experience, my rain garb is a wool knit cap, the aforementioned wool jacket with a lightweight cotton T-shirt to keep the scratchies away, an extra sweater if it's REAL cold, and shorts with polypropylene longjohns. As for keeping the feet dry, I like my Notes slip-on half boots over by shoes with a pair of wool socks on underneath, and an extra pair or two in my bag. The half-boots are great for keeping the down tube splash off my toes. Some people put plastic bags over their socks before putting their shoes on. Whatever your fancy. Unless you like catching pneumonia, keep those feet warm and dry. I don't recommend totally waterproof raincoats, parkas, et al, because all that happens is that your warm, moist body air hits the much cooler surface of your raincoat and miserably turns to condensation and the end result is you're wet and cold anyway. Wool breathability and wicking (drawing moisture away from the body) makes it the better rainwear material. But for walkers, though, a raincoat is OK.

Now for keeping manifests packages and envelopes dry. This impresses the hell out of receptionists. Some companies have plastic air freight bags which work great as rain bags. My old Executive rain bag has been a fixture in my basket for nigh upon a year, and can still be

counted on to keep packages dry. Be sure that the bag is big enough for the top to be rolled over at least several times after all your packages, bag, etc. are inside. This ensures that water can't get in through the opening at the top. Also, I like to carry a small variety of different size bags to accommodate all the different size packages I get. It's another good idea to carry cloth hand towels in your bag to dry your hands on before grabbing your manifest or packages.

Nothing else for me to say? Just remember: Stay safe, stay dry (or at least warm), have fun, proj on. It's a lot of work, long hours w/o lunch or breaks sometimes; but the paychecks will serve to ease the pain. Avé Mercurius!







## Water From a Goddamn Holy Man

by Adam

The signs were good. The signs were everywhere—and as Jason weaved his bike up California Street on that warm, electric blue evening, they told him that he was about to experience yet another PERFECT MOMENT. He was entering the Buddhahood once more.

A half hour earlier, California was a three-ring circus. Large motor vehicles squeezing him off the road generally made him feel good. But now it was barren and lonely, like a surreal landscape of the city of the dead.

He steered north onto Sansome. His data banks were overflowing. Big answers to big questions could be found on an evening such as this. In alleyways or in courtyards that couldn't be seen from the street—but that he'd been riding long enough to see anyway.

"Damn, I hate this job," he thought. The worst part is locking your bike sixty times—no. Signing into buildings...flat tires...my company."

A familiar pain shot through Jason's knees.

"What if the pain isn't really coming from my knees? What if it comes from having to deal with everyone down here in Zombieland? How could anyone relate to

such people? I especially hate those sorry secretaries who never smile and daffy doormen who smile too much."

He flew down Sansome and pondered his most recent record setting mood-swing. Could it have been brought on by an acute karmic reaction to a heinous deed inflicted upon his fellow man? His radio, which had been barking out commands non-stop was playing dead—and for the twenty eighth time that day, he made an old lady jump.

"Hey Jay."

Jason turned and caught sight of his soul brother of the streets, Matt. Jason was happy to see him; they had lots in common.

"What you been up to, Jay?"

"Oh, the same old thing. Playing on this dude's record. Starring in some movie. Heading for Europe. Learning to hangglide. How about you?"

"Much of the same, 'cept I'm also trying to make time to get drunk every day."

"Cool," said Jason. "So anything of value happen to you today?"

"Not really. Well, sort of—I almost had to punch out this bum."

"Hey, can I ask you a personal quesiton?"

"Shoot."

"Well," Jason began, "There are these two well dressed plastic-coloured yuppie babes standing off the corner waiting for the light to turn and I'm on a course to run right up behind 'em."

"Uh huh."

"But as I get close I see that there's this big puddle in my way and unless I veer off course dramatically, somebody's gonna get all wet and probably ruin their stockings or whatever."

"A puddle?"

"Hell, I don't know what it was doing there."

"A puddle." A devilish smile passed over Matt's kisser. "T'd fuckin' splash 'em to Kingdom Come. What'd you do?"

"I splashed 'em and now I'm not exactly sure how I feel about it."

Matt was livid. "WHAT?"

Jason shrunk back. "It's just that, I'm really a decent sort...sort of."

"Decency has nothing to do with it!" Matt shouted.

"If you splashed 'em, they really must have deserved it;

being little yupsters and all."

"I try not to hurt anybody," Jason offered meekly. "Not on purpose, anyway."

"You didn't hurt 'em, you got 'em wet—big difference. How about all those days we gotta ride out in the pouring rain and they're scurrying around like rats under designer umbrellas?"

"Yeah, I know."

"That's right, Jay, don't worry about it. I mean, if anything, it's like you did those chicks a favor."

"You think?"

"Believe me. They gotta walk around in those nylons all day going from meetings to lunches to elevator flirtations to home to TV to boring sex. The dumbest lives imaginable."

"I guess."

"It's like me and you, Jay, we're above all that. We don't live by their laws. As a matter of fact, we break many laws, every day. The cops know they can't control us—you know why? 'Cause we're above the cops!"

"You got that much right, my brother."

"Basically," Matt rolled on, "we are kings out here. This is our turf and if they don't like it they can take a flying fuck out of our way."

"So somebody got wet." Matt was smiling now.

"Those broads should be thankful that you cared enough to do it. No? Yes!!! It's the best thing that could have happened to 'em."

They were both laughing now.

"WAKE THE FUCK UP, MOTHER FUCKERS!"

Think of that water as a gift—from you—to those sillier, less fortunate souls.

"Like a Baptism."

"Right. Like water from a Goddamn holy man!"

"Perhaps," Jason began, with a slow and glazed stare, "perhaps they will gain some enlightenment from the experience. I doubt it, but you never know."

A crackling noise emanated from Matt's radio.

"Go to 655 Montgomery, Round Table Pizza, and pick up a 345 Spear. Oh, and be sure you sign in and use the freight elevator this time, huh knucklehead?"

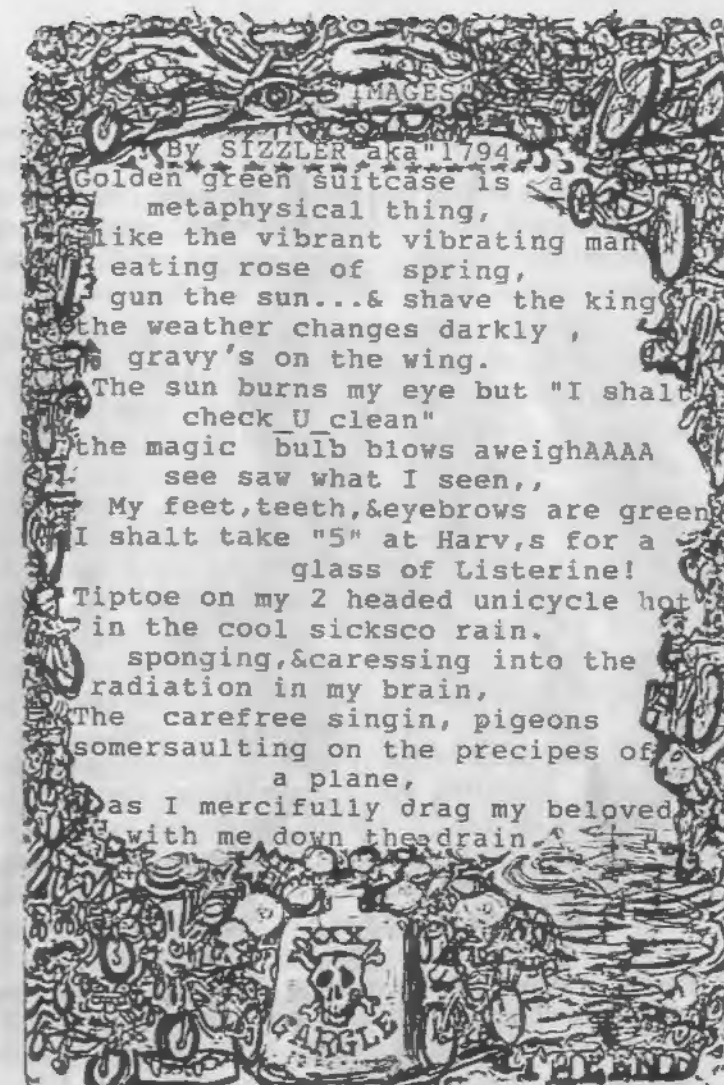
"Ten-four," came the requisite response.

Within seconds Matt was obediently peeling away.

"Think about all I have said, young Jason. The future of the world depends on you."

For Jason, however, there was no longer a need to thing—'cause the signs were good. The signs were everywhere. He was in the midst of another PERFECT MOMENT. He had entered the Buddhahood once more.

Love your neighbors even if they play the trumpet  
-Jewish Proverb



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# Keep It Between Your Legs

by Jason Pretty-Good

Those people are out there, the ones just drifting around downtown, looking for anything that could be a quick steal. Some have the bolt cutters sticking out of their jacket, some are just out cruising around and would grab anything that isn't locked down—car stereo, the dolly out of the back of a delivery truck, a Schwimm one-speed that's hanging out in front of 235 Mont. And then there are the real bike thieves, the ones out looking for a Klein or a Cannondale. These guys are prepared to bust some Krypto to get at the thousand dollar bike that's sitting there on the street. These thieves are probably looking for the bike that is some businessman's new exercise routine—he puffs it into work and then leaves it attached to a shrub all day. Unfortunately these serious thieves often stumble across our trusty steeds.

Officially the rate of return for stolen bikes by the fuzz is about 20 percent. So the odds on getting your bike back from the cops is something like a long shot in hell. The car theft return-rate is closer to 70 percent, so we all know where the cops' priorities are. It is also obvious that as messengers we have access to a much better stolen bicycle hotline than anything the cops could ever come up with—the company radio channels. Getting your bike's description out onto as many different companies' airwaves as quickly as possible is key to getting your bike back. If you step out and your bike has vanished, you're better off getting to a phone, calling your dispatcher and getting your bike's description out on the airwaves than spending too much time running up and down Kearny looking for it. Get your dispatcher to call a couple of other companies too and the news will spread quickly. The streets have eyes and we are it.

It used to be everybody left their bikes unlocked at some point in time, maybe just to run in to 550 Mont or 201 Cal; but even that is getting pretty rare. An unlocked bike is just too much temptation for some rookie Aero walker (just kidding you Aero heads, don't get all bent out of shape). No, the junkies and homeless wandering around are going to jump all over an unlocked bike. All it says to them is, "Fifty bucks!" At the other extreme it is important to note that no locking system is completely impenetrable. There are blowtorches and pneumatic tools out on the market that will cut through any mass produced lock. If your bike looks like a million bucks and can be easily thrown in the back of a pickup there are going to be people who are quite interested in it.

A big part of the problem is that bikes look like an easy way to score some cash. If you see some office-type locking their florescent Trek by the front wheel (make that by the quick release front wheel) to a bike rack, it's worth your time to straighten 'em out. People like that give sleazebags the idea that there is easy money lying around at bike racks. And another point in discouraging bike theft—don't buy wheels from winos for five bucks! It doesn't matter if it's a beautiful wheel and your wheels are about

as untrue as Ollie North—buying parts from these guys just encourages them to pillage our bikes.

Until someone comes up with an exploding Krypto, something like a combination lock/handgrenade, something that turns into flying shrapnel when someone tries to break it, there are always going to be people trying to bust Kryptos. Not long after they invented U-type bike locks some ingenious soul in New York came up with method of breaking Kryptos with a piece of steel pipe. The method quickly spread not only across the country but across the planet. They take a big, long steel pipe, insert it over the end of the cross bar and torque it backwards until the lock goes POP. The piece of pipe must fit snugly over the small portion of the crossbar that extends beyond where the "U" slides in. If the diameter of the pipe is too wide it slips off. If it's too small it won't go on at all. Bike shops have started selling "cuffs" which slide over the tip of the cross bar and have a hole for the "U" to slip through. These simply make it less likely that a thief will have the correct fitting piece of pipe. The Freewheel has them. This cuff also strengthens the lock end in case someone is trying to freeze it with freon. A "T" shaped plumbing fitting works just as well and is cheaper.

If you are locking your bike for a long period of time, let's say anything over five minutes, lock it to something—bike rack, parking meter, telephone pole, the roll bar of that Jeep that's completely blocking the sidewalk, anything. If you are locking for a long time, like City Hall-type time increments, you might try locking with the cross bar of the Krypto on the wall side of the bike. For example, most people locking their bike to the hand rail at City Hall loop the U portion of the Krypto around the hand rail, and attach the cross bar of the lock between their body and the bike. For most purposes that is the easiest, quickest, most efficient way of using the Krypto. But if you want to increase your security—lets say there are lots of shady characters milling around—you can do so by turning the Krypto around. Put the cross bar next to the wall with the bottom of the U piece wrapping back around towards your body. This is effective because the



cross bar is the most vulnerable part of the Krypto (especially if you have Krypto-imitation like a "Master" or something that came with your first Huff). Putting the cross bar between the hand rail and the wall makes it a bitch to get at. Anyone who is trying to pry on it with a piece of pipe, or do the old freeze-it-with-freon-and-then-beat-on-it-with-a-hammer trick is going to have a hard time just getting their tools in there.

When locking long term consider what you are locking to. Make sure that pole actually has a sign on the top of it and that it's cemented into the ground. It might sound dumb but some of those parking meters lift straight out of the sidewalk, making stealing your bike pretty easy. It's also worth noting that parking meter poles are quite rigid and because of that aren't the best thing to lock up to if there is a choice. The rigidity of the parking meters makes prying against them extremely effective. If there is a thick cable or one of those metal street signs as an option, they are actually better for long term locking because they tend to bend a bit if someone is trying to pry against them.

I was going to assume that everyone knows about the car jack method but looking at the way some people lock their bikes I'd say not everybody's clear on the concept yet. Here's the latest trend in zen and the art of bicycle thievery: they take a Volvo car jack stick it in between the two sides of the U on the Krypto, crank up the jack until the Krypto goes POP and ride away on the bike. It's quick, it's cheap—the bike thieving scum love it. The thing is that this is the easiest goddamn technique to protect against. Just make sure that they can't stick the Volvo jack into the middle of the lock! Encompass as many pieces of steel on your bike as you can when you lock up, so that there isn't a big open space in the middle of the lock when you leave it. Just locking by the cross bar or the down tube is inviting this technique. If you get one of the wheels encompassed in the Krypto along with a sign post and one of the tubes then the chances of them being able to get the Volvo jack in there are greatly diminished.

The new little Kryptos are great for protecting against the car jack method. One of the problems with going out and picking up a new Mini-Krypto is that if you are locking up somewhere for a long time you can't lock both your wheels and the frame to a pole. The Mini simply isn't big enough to fit around all that stuff. The thick, new 8000 series cables that Krypto is putting out also would be pretty tough to get through with a car jack. Cobra links, those shiny chrome locks that look like toy snakes, have been protecting motorcycles for years; they have come out with a thinner model that they are hoping will catch on with cyclists. These things are pretty impenetrable by conventional methods but they aren't cheap. You might be better off going out and getting two feet of logging chain. Krypto is also putting out THE ROCK, THE ROCK II, and we expect more sequels soon. These are better than a can of mace for personal protection and work pretty well on the old treadmill as well. If you do buy a new Krypto or Rhode Gear lock or some other brand name that offers an insurance policy on your bike getting ripped off, read the fine print. You often have to bend over backwards and juggle in order to ever get any money out of them. A lot of it has to do with registering your bike immediately after you buy the bike, otherwise they will give ya nada.

It's worth realizing that your bike might disappear at some

point in time. Unfortunately the more time that passes, the less likely that you'll ever see your dearly beloved ever again... but do not abandon all hope. A lot of bikes do resurface. If the little slimeball isn't caught immediately and the bike does turn up, you're probably going to have to prove that the bike is actually yours. Make sure you have a copy of your bike's serial number somewhere. A lot of the newer bikes have their serial number stamped on the underside of the crank. Copy it down and keep it in your wallet. It's worth noting that a hot bike might change hands three or four times in one day. The guy that stole it sells it for a quick forty bucks to his neighbor down the hall. The neighbor unloads it for a hundred to his landlord. The landlord sells it to some German tourist for a hundred and fifty. You come up to the German tourist and threaten to kill him and he gets quite upset. It's an awkward situation. So you need to be prepared to prove that this is your bike. Having the serial number in your wallet will be quite impressive but here's an even a better tactic. Write your name on two sheets of paper. Stick each sheet in a plastic sandwich baggy and jam one into the handlebars behind the plug and the other down the seat tube. This should settle any disputes over ownership without things getting too violent. Another technique to consider is to register your bike with the National Bike Registry. They charge a fee of \$5/year or \$25 for life, which is a little steep but they will enter your bikes serial number on their national database and if your bike ever ends up in police custody somewhere, they'll contact you. It's a useful method in getting your bike back it ends up in Mesa, Arizona or someplace like that. They can be contacted at 1-800-848-BIKE or 1832 Tribute Road, Sacramento, Calif. 95815.

Of course the best security we have is each other. If you see someone riding a bike that looks suspicious, stop and ask them about it. Just pulling up alongside them and saying "Hey where did you get that bike?" might cause them to dump the bike and run off screaming down Natoma. You never know. If it's actually their bike then they aren't going to get all bent out of shape over you just asking. It's the people that are all defensive that are probably riding a hot bike. Keep your eyes peeled, your bike buckled down and with any luck we'll keep our bikes between our legs.

One option if you don't feel like going out and spending your hard-earned cash on a superlock is to get Interlox, designed and manufactured by former messenger Rick Byrd. Interlox are metal strips that slide onto the Krypto and stretch between the two sides of the lock. These are ideal for that lock that came with your first Huff. Their main function is to make it extremely difficult to get a car jack into the lock. Because Interlox sit in the middle of the lock they also lend structural support, simply making it harder to break. And one other great thing about this accessory is that it increases the number of things you can lock to. Interlox slide off so you can use the full size of your Krypto when you need it, then they slide back on when you want the extra security. Rick is planning to go international, marketing these babies worldwide so you better get 'em while they're hot. We'll be having more info about Interlox right before they hit the bike shops.



## Bongo's Bike Theft Report.

And yet another success story!

The red Shogun mentioned in last month's report was recovered the very same day it was ripped off. Luckily, that day ended well for our unfortunate Western Messenger.

Casey was standing by outside of 760 Market with his bike by his side; he was just daydreaming, kind of pondering the nature of the universe; and when he turned and found that his bike was no longer with him.

He fumed. Could this be real? he probably thought to himself. To me it sounds like every biker's worst nightmare: one second their Iron Steed is by their side, the next second it is gone, snuck away by some sleazeball from the underworld.

Casey walked up Mark-up telling messengers of his situation as he went. He reached 6th and was heading back to the shop when he found his basket on the corner of Natoma. It was empty. This thief was working quickly. He had already stripped the bike and was probably at Civic Center trying to sell it.

He was. Later that day some fellow messengers spotted Casey's red Shogun near Civic. Some one was attempting to sell her. These messengers decided it would be best to get the cops involved. They went to a nearby cop shop and told them of their plight. But when they arrived at Civic with the officers, the thief had vanished. The messengers swooped around the block and at once located the thief. But at that time he was aware that he was being shadowed. He tried to flee, and the bikers gave chase. An officer parked at a corner saw the "stop thief" scene and helped the bikers apprehend our suspect and the stolen bicycle.

Unfortunately no charges were pressed against the person. There was no proof that he actually stole the bike, and he probably got released that same day. Oh well, at least Casey got his bike back, only a little the worse for wear.

Although these success stories may be positive and informative in a way, lets hope that they won't continue. With a little wisdom and communication we can make these thieves aware of our solidarity.

Next month, hopefully in the absence of theft reports, I will comment about how not to get ripped off by bike thieves: Where not to park, where to beg and plead with the lobby

guards to let you take your bike up in the building, and where to find the building guard who removed your bike.

Until next time.....

—These are the known bikes still missing:

Stolen from GG park polo field Oct 18: Black carbonfibre frame, leather seat, silver hologram stickers. Contact Jane 626-2506

☐ ☐ ☐

Gray Peugeot US Express, with silver forks and blue Mtn rack. Contact Paul, #526 at Pro-Mess

☐ ☐ ☐

Orange 1991 Peugeot, Mojave with speckles. -Pewar! Contact Brenda at 285-3608 or 989-2151

☐ ☐ ☐

Please contact us at 564 Mission #152, S.F. CA 94105 if you have any information on these bikes or any other stolen bicycles. Thank you.

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# Lard and Caviar

by cookie hammett

My husband recounted a tale to me recently which moved me to start this column. Two young messengers approached him. One said to the other, "Do you want to ask him?"

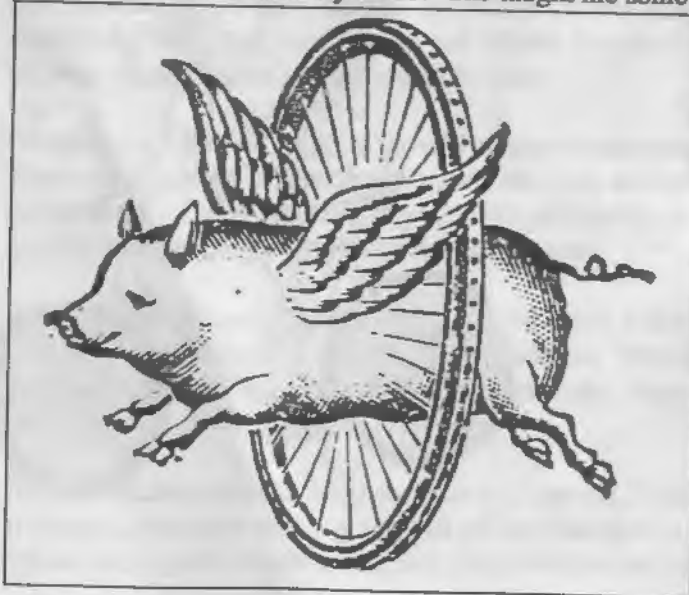
Their question was: "How do you survive on what we make?"

A funny question, I thought, on one hand: like a sleepwalker who suddenly awakens and asks himself, "How did I get here?" or, perhaps better, a conscious person who suddenly asks himself the same thing. On the other hand, and I felt more strongly inclined in this direction: it was a poignant question, because it wouldn't have been asked if these people had felt they were surviving, or at least had a grip on survival on these low wages.

My husband rattled off a few of the things we do to conserve money in both entertainment and necessities. These are the biggest things we do to conserve cash, of course—cutting down on our food and energy bills and finding inexpensive things to do. It helps a great deal, I'm sure, for him to have a wife who is fiercely cheap and very willing to experiment with strange bargain foodstuffs and inexpensive staples, making meals out of whatever is lying around the house most of the time; also someone who is hawkishly aware of things which are free (though she has friends in the messenger community who are better at dumpster gleaning than she, bless their hearts).

But one does not even need a wife with these obnoxious traits to have someone help him or her out with getting by: one need only to stay tuned each month, read this column and hang together with one's friends.

My mother is cheap, too—to a point even I find ridiculous. Xeroxed birthday cards? She taught me some



useful things, though:

1. Don't run the oven unless you have a lot to bake or roast in there. It costs a lot to heat that sucker up!
2. Almost any leftovers can be covered with cheese, and this makes them taste better.
3. If something in the store is marked down a flat rate, say a cut of meat at 30¢ a package, you get a better percentage off if you buy small packages.
4. Send children to work at a very early age.

My father has always had some tips, but more in the financial realm—i.e. presuming you have some money to begin with. I will include only one, which doesn't presume much:

-Pay your bills on time, even if you have to borrow money to do it, because the interest creditors charge can be hideous when your bills are overdue.

And here are some of my own rules of thumb:

1. Don't pay a bill unless you absolutely have to.
2. Invite friends who are richer than you over for dinner. Then when they reciprocate you eat better. It helps if they can cook.
3. Buy spices in bulk. NEVER buy those little cans and jars. Also: tea. Fresher, too.
4. Don't buy day old bread, because it will get moldy and you will have to throw half of it away.

Initial gem: A staple of your knowledge of how to get by in San Francisco is Canned Foods Warehouse, at 1717 Harrison. Many messengers shop here already, and save a mint. You never know exactly what you'll find there, because it's mostly factory seconds and overruns, etc., but you can always count on their carrying

- some shampoo
- some soap
- some sorts of wine and/or beer
- pasta
- day old bread (see above)
- cheese
- lunch meat, if you like that sort of thing
- frozen convenience food and vegetables
- (almost always) cans of tomatoes

and all of this at around 50% savings. Everything is guaranteed; all you have to do is bring it back and tell them you didn't like it, including beer and wine which has been opened. One time we returned cat food and told them our cat didn't like it and they took it back. Very amusing place—many languages flying around and many funky things causing one to ponder why these things landed in Canned Foods Warehouse.

In addition, they move scores of other things in and

out (quickly). If you have found you like something, go back and immediately buy as much as you can (if it keeps). Go early on weekend mornings, say before noon, to beat the crowds.

You can use your Canned Foods Warehouse cheese and tomatoes in this quick and easy dish. Sometimes the other ingredients are there, too.

## Spanish Rice

Prologue: to make your own broth: boil something like crazy, either bones or some sort of vegetable, then strain out excess stuff which isn't broth. Don't use eggplant (it turns bitter) or too much cabbage or celery (too strong), though. Voila broth. You can use canned broth in this recipe if you don't want to make your own.

- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cups rice
- salt
- 4 Tablespoons oil
- broth, canned or fresh, approx. 1-1/2 cups
- 1 large can tomatoes, 23 oz.
- fresh ground black pepper
- chili powder
- shredded cheese, jack or mozzarella—about 1 cup; more or less to taste

In a large skillet (preferably with deep sides 3" or so) or wok saute onion in oil until transparent. Add rice and saute until brown. Add more oil if necessary. Keep stirring or it will stick. It takes a while to get brown. Add enough broth until rice isn't quite covered but everything's wet. Stir well. When that's begun to be absorbed, throw in chili powder, pepper and tomatoes. Reduce heat to simmer and cover. Allow to simmer about 15 minutes, then peek. Stir it around a little, test for firmness of rice and add cheese. Cover again and simmer. Test in a few minutes when cheese is melted. It's done when cheese is melted and rice is no longer crunchy. Serve with a salad or something green. Makes a lot. Use next day with beans for burrito filling.

Canned foods Wine O' the Month:

Chateau Ste Michelle 1985 Washington Fumé Blanc. \$2.49.

Nice apple-y Chardonnay-ish fumé. More delicate than most fumés. Not quite so tart. Fruity. Great alone or with vegetarian food. Also chicken.

Hang around for next month's episode, where we will explore Christmas Shopping, and Other Shame

## Skate Hockey Match

information provided by Dick Waggin'

1st match	Jak's vs. Go Team	3-0 Go won
2nd match	Sharks vs. Go Team	5-0 Sharks

## New Messenger Mall to Rival 939 Harrison

Three independent companies have found a way to co-operate in order to overcome rent problems. Ultra Messenger, Pete's Delivery, and Lickety Split Delivery will no longer disrupt the home lives of their owners. They are all going in on a place @ 150 8th Street, infinitely more accessible to downtown than the Haight, the Avenues, and the Mission. Maybe the new location will flourish as a messenger hang-out since the original messenger mall gave us the boot. What I want to know is: how will they keep rates secret from each other? -Amerigo

